



Action Guides

What Adults Can Do
To Support Early Learning and
Development



Connecticut Office of
Early Childhood

Connecticut Early Learning and Development Standards



Action Guides

The early years of a child's life are very important. This is when most of a child's growth and development take place. Each child grows and develops at a different rate, but all children are able to learn.

In this booklet you will find Action Guides for eight different areas of child development and learning. Each Action Guide describes a learning area and gives ideas for helping children as they grow and learn. We hope you use the ideas inside every day!

The Connecticut Early Learning and Development Standards (CT ELDS) has more detail about the stages of development and learning from birth to five. For example, it shows how very young babies grow from trying to reach an object to figuring out how things work and finally to thinking of different ways to solve a problem. To learn more about what children from birth to age five should know and be able to do, download the CT ELDS and other materials at www.ct.gov/oec/elds.



Connecticut Office of
Early Childhood



Connecticut Early Learning
and Development Standards

Cognition

Making sense of the world, staying with something
and working hard to solve problems



What adults can do...

Encourage

- Exploring
- Asking Questions and Making Choices
- Pretending and Having Fun
- Remembering
- Trying New and Difficult Things



Infants and Toddlers

Pretend with your child. Pretend a banana is a phone or feed a doll.

Give your child choices. Let your child choose a snack or what to wear.

Give your child lots of different experiences. Explore your neighborhood parks, libraries and museums. Play with things that are used in different ways (to make sounds, build, etc.)

Show your baby how things work. "Look at how the car rolls."

Play games that involve back-and-forth. As your child gets older, help them wait for a short time.

Preschoolers

Use everyday routines to notice patterns. Point out familiar routines (first we wash hands, then we eat).

Sort and categorize throughout the day. Picking up toys and laundry are great sorting activities.

Wonder with your child. "I wonder if it's going to rain today." Encourage your child to ask questions.

Point out and use symbols. Encourage your child to recognize and name signs and symbols.

Support your child to finish things they start. Help them plan and stick with things for longer periods of time.

CTELDS

Connecticut Early Learning
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Social & Emotional Development

Understanding yourself, your feelings and how to play with other people



What adults can do...

Encourage

- Caring
- Affection
- Relationships
- Safety and Security

Infants and Toddlers

Spend time holding, talking and playing with your baby. Caring contact builds a strong relationship.

Comfort your baby when he cries. This helps your baby feel secure and learn how to calm down.

Talk about your baby's actions, feelings and body. This will help your baby learn about themselves.

Have family routines. Routines help babies feel safe.

Preschoolers

Let your child do some things on their own. Support them to do new things and solve problems.

Talk to your child about feelings. Help them find ways to calm themselves.

Help your child understand routines. Be sure to say goodbye when you leave your child.

Make time to play with other children. Go to the park, have playdates or join a playgroup.



CTELDS

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Physical Health & Development

Learning to take care of yourself and to do things with your body and hands so that you grow strong and healthy



What adults can do...

Encourage

- Healthy Eating
- Physical Activity
- Helping with Self-care

Infants and Toddlers

Lay your baby on their tummy while they are awake. “Tummy time” helps build strong muscles.

Talk while you take care of them.

Have them be a part of healthy routines such as waking up, eating and dressing.

Encourage exploring objects with their hands. Give them small, but safe, items to use with their hands.

Make sure they are healthy. Children who get enough rest and healthy food learn better.

Preschoolers

Find a time and place for your child to run and play. Running, jumping and climbing help build strong muscles and bones.

Have your child take part in self-care.

Talk to them about why being clean is important; show them how to use buttons and zippers, etc.

Offer your child healthy food choices.

Talk about healthy food and eating a variety of good things.

Make sure they get enough rest.

Preschoolers need 11-13 hours of sleep each day to stay healthy and learn.



CTELDS

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Language & Literacy

Communicating using your body, language, signs and written communication



What adults can do...

Encourage

- Interacting with people
- Gesturing, making noise and talking
- Enjoying books, songs and writing
- Expressing ideas, needs and feelings
- Writing

Infants and Toddlers

Share books everyday. Read stories at bedtime or when riding on the bus.

Talk and sing with your baby.

Encourage them to “sing” and “talk” too.

Respond to your baby’s noises.

Repeat the noises they make or comment, “You sound happy.”

Help them learn new words by naming and describing what you see. “I see a shiny, silver mirror.”

**Read books to your child
EVERY DAY!**

Preschoolers

Show interest in what your child is saying. Look at them when they talk and comment on what they’re saying.

Ask questions that make them think.

When reading a story ask, “What do you think will happen next?”

Talk to your child about what happens during the day. Talk about what you do together and ask about what happens when you are apart.

Let them practice “writing.” Ask them to draw a picture or make a list, even if they use shapes instead of letters.

**Read books to your child
EVERY DAY!**



CTELDS

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Creative Arts

Enjoying music, dance and art and expressing yourself in these ways



What adults can do...

Encourage

- Listening and dancing to music
- Describing art and music
 - Looking at pictures
 - Being creative
- Making music and art

Infants and Toddlers

Play music for your child. Describe the music and how it makes you feel.

Sing to your child. Move to the music while you're singing.

Show your child pictures. Talk about the picture, what's in it, its colors, the shapes...

Encourage your child to create. Give children art supplies that are appropriate and safe.

Preschoolers

Display your child's art work. Talk about what they did to make it.

Give your child space to move to music. Play music with different beats and styles.

Encourage your child to be creative. Don't worry about what the project looks like.

Expose them to the arts. Watch dancing, look at paintings, listen to music, read books about art, theater and music.



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Mathematics

Understanding numbers and how to use them,
counting, patterns, measuring and shapes



What adults can do...

Encourage

- Counting
- Measuring
- Comparing

Infants and Toddlers

Use words that describe how much.

Talk about wanting more or having one or two of something.

Talk about shapes. Describe everyday things such as food, toys, or household items, saying things like, "Your plate is a circle."

Compare sizes. Use words such as big, little, long and short.

Use math words. Talk about adding one, taking away, dividing something.

Preschoolers

Count things. Count how many steps it takes to get somewhere, how many pieces of fruit you buy at the store, etc.

Cook together. Let your child help measure and count what goes into the recipe.

Sort and match. Match clothes, sort silverware, play with shape sorters.

Compare size, shape and position. Talk to your child about where things are, measure and compare sizes and talk about the shape of everyday items.



CTELDS

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Science

Understanding the world around us,
including living things, the earth and space and energy



What adults can do...

Encourage

- Exploring
- Experimenting
- Investigating
- Learning about Living Things

Infants and Toddlers

Be excited about their discoveries.

Point out the things they see, hear or feel. "You saw the bird fly down from the nest to get food for its babies! Wasn't that exciting?"

Answer their questions. Encourage them to ask about things they want to know.

Make sure they have many different kinds of experiences. Find opportunities to explore new places, see nature and investigate.

Preschoolers

Give them toys that they can use to explore. Boxes, balls, ramps, bubbles, magnets, containers, magnifying glasses, etc.

Grow things. Plant seeds and talk about what will happen and what seeds need to grow.

Go outside. Look at the sky, trees, plants, animals...collect things and talk about them.

Ask questions. "What do you think will happen next?" "What do you see?"





Connecticut Early Learning
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Social Studies

Understanding the world and knowing about the people in it. This starts with knowing about your family, then the community and world.



What adults can do...

Encourage

- Understanding family
- Hearing stories about the past
- Recognizing how people are the same and different

Infants and Toddlers

Help them learn about themselves.

Children need to learn about their own bodies, their family and their feelings so they can learn about others.

Talk about family. Talk about who is a part of your family and about other people's families.

Talk about the places you go. Children will learn about the community when you talk about the store, the library, the park, etc.

Preschoolers

Point out where things are in the community. Draw maps of your home or school.

Talk about how people are the same and different. Help your child to appreciate people who are different from them.

Talk about when you were little. Children love to hear stories and can begin to learn about time and history.

Play "store." Children can learn about buying and selling through play.



Do you have questions about a child's development?



Many times, families have questions about how their child is developing. Screening tools, like the Ages and Stages Questionnaire, are often used to quickly check for children's strengths and find areas where more information might be needed. The Ages and Stages Questionnaire is a tool that parents and early care providers can use together. The Child Development Infoline can also give you information and refers families to resources in their community if there are questions and/or concerns about a child's development, behavior and/or learning.

For information on the Ages and Stages Questionnaire, or for information and resources, please call the Child Development Infoline at 1-800-505-7000 or go to www.ctunitedway.org/cdi.html.



